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Technical assistance and capacity-building

Written statement* submitted by the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[21 August 2018]

* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.

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Technical assistance and capacity-building for Yemen in the field of human rights

ODVV recognizes the importance and centrality of technical assistance and capacity building in the field of human rights, as a way for moving forward and preventing risks and possible human rights crises. The technical cooperation programs were identified as central to State efforts in the promotion and protection of human rights. Through the international obligations the countries have to support the integration of human rights in sustainable development, including the right to Pease and development.

In this regard we believe that international cooperation has not brought Pease for Yemeni people for sustainable Pease we think that Governments are facing serious human rights challenges.

Also it must be said that during years of conflict in Yemen the right to peace alongside the right to development of the Yemeni people have been violated and the coalition forces who are beating the war drums are responsible for the violation of the Yemeni nation. To this aim, the item on technical assistance and capacity-building for Yemen in the field of human rights is an opportunity for further cooperation and interaction to solve the Yemeni crisis.

Resolving the Yemen crisis and its ensuing human catastrophes in which children are its first victims is only possible with the cooperation of countries. The brutal butchering of 28 children on their way back from a school field trip in Sada in Saudi Arabia and its coalition's airstrikes in August 2018, which have been repeatedly taken place in different forms in the last few years, is an alarm bell for the international community.

A look at the causes and consequences of the Yemeni crisis

To reach international cooperation and assistance to reduce the misery of the Yemeni people which have resulted from the coalition forces attacks and the perpetual war, we must pay attention to the fact that the man-made catastrophe in Yemen has international repercussions and has affected numerous human fields and its solution requires the cooperation of all countries and international organizations. To put an end to the human rights violations in Yemen, governments and international organizations must cooperate with each other to resolve the following issues and mechanisms that reduce the further deterioration of conditions within this framework.

- attacking civilians and protected objects
- impediments to humanitarian access
- children

1 attacking civilians and protected objects and properties

The population of Yemen is just impoverished: hungry, displaced, sick, injured or dying. And this situation is worsening at a daily basis. Public and private infrastructure has collapsed. Less than half of the health facilities are functional. Factories and farms have been damaged, while public sector salaries have not been paid. [1]

The extensive air, land and sea attacks of the Saudi-led coalition forces and their allies have destroyed Yemeni infrastructures, such as hospitals, schools, roads, bridges, water and electricity. And in spite of the warnings of international humanitarian organizations, the coalition forces continue to relentlessly attack civic infrastructures.

On 2th August 2018 a source at Hodeidah's health office told Middle East Eye that 60 people were killed in the strikes, with more than 100 wounded. According to witnesses, the strike at the hospital hit as casualties were taken there from the port and the market.[2]

[1] https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=22174.

2 Impediments to humanitarian access

Impediments to humanitarian assistance is one of the biggest obstacles in providing aid to the people in Yemen. Destruction of roads and communication networks, lack of petrol stations due to relentless coalition forces airstrikes in the recent years and most importantly the siege of strategic ports such as Hodeidah in Yemen, have escalated the humanitarian crisis in the country. This is while 8.4 million people do not know if they will ever have their next meal. Another 10 million people could find themselves in the same situation by the end of the year. Since 2015, the conflict has forced more than 3 million people leave their homes, including more than 2 million who have still remained displaced. An unprecedented outbreak of cholera and acute watery diarrhea has gripped Yemen since April 2017, with over 1.1 million cases.

Aid workers have warned the assault on Hodeidah's port, known as the 'mouth of Yemen', could shut down the vital route for some 70 percent of Yemen's food and humanitarian aid. Two-thirds of Yemen's population of 27 million relies on aid and 8.4 m are already at risk of starving.[3]

3 Protection of children

Dealing with the conditions of children in Yemen and cooperation in this regard is necessary because it saves millions of children who have only experienced war, violence and famine in their lives. A review of this situation can determine the importance of cooperation and efforts to reach suitable solutions.

Nearly half a million children have dropped out of school since the 2015 escalation of conflict in Yemen, bringing the total number of out-of-school children to 2 million, according to a UNICEF assessment.[4] Almost three quarters of public school teachers have not been paid their salaries in over a year, putting the education of an additional 4.5 million children at grave risk.
An entire generation of children in Yemen faces a bleak future because of limited or no access to education,"[5]. Even those who remain at school are not getting the quality education they need. More than 2,500 schools are out of use, with two thirds damaged by attacks, 27 per cent closed and 7 per cent used for military purposes or as shelters for displaced people.[6]

At least 2,419 children have been recruited in the fighting since March 2015. A 2016 survey across six governorates revealed that close to three quarters of women had been married before the age of 18, while nearly half had been married before age 15.

The critical conditions of Yemeni children alongside the hampering of humanitarian assistance and attacks against civilians requires real strong political will. The fact that some member states of the Human Rights Council through airstrikes against civilian centers and ports are taking part in the crimes against women, children and civilians, is not a hidden problem.

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[2] http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/saudi-coalition-air-strike-kills-scores-yemens-hodeidah-289389468.
[3] https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jun/16/yemen-attack-hundreds-killed-as-rebels-grip-on-hodeidah-airport-loosens.
[4] https://www.unicef.org/yemen/media_12502.html.
[5] said Meritxell Relaño, UNICEF Representative in Yemen.
[6] https://www.unicef.org/yemen/media_12502.html.

Recommendations

1. ODVV calls for immediate cessation of airstrikes on Port Hodeidah and other places which are centers of providing humanitarian aid to Yemen. Also ODVV calls upon Human Rights Council member states to provide cooperation as quickly as possible under Item 10.

2. ODVV deems the commitment and accountability of a government towards its citizens as the most important good governance principle, and believes that by taking part in attacks against Yemeni civilians, medical centres and hospitals and ports, not only has the Yemeni government not fulfilled its duties as the representative of the people, but it also is responsible for crimes committed against the Yemenis.

3. ODVV deems the first step towards improvement of the humanitarian situation in Yemen halting military attacks in the country and the next step the multilateral international efforts to establish peace and reconciliation among all sides in Yemen.

4. ODVV calls for an end to the siege of the people of Yemen and calls upon the Yemeni government stop supporting those who have put a siege on Yemen so that the people who need the highest levels of humanitarian aid and assistance, to be free from the "man-made" human catastrophe.

5. Shortage of cash budgets for the provision of humanitarian assistance according to UN Under-Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs, Mark Lowcock prevents suitable humanitarian aid in Yemen. Thus, the ODVV calls upon all countries and international organizations to make an effort for the provision of international humanitarian aid budget.